

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE
COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 20 JUNE 2016 IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE
CASTLE, HERTFORD AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT: The Mayor, Councillor Dr L Radford, in the Chair at the start of the meeting

Councillors: P Boyle, S Cousins, Mrs S Dunkley, Miss C Geall, Miss J Sartin and A Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr P Ruffles
Mr J Whelan – Town Clerk
Ms P Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager
Miss J Haynes, Customer Services Assistant

71. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Miss J Sartin was elected Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year. The Chairman then took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

72. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Mrs S Dunkley was elected Vice Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year.

73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dr J Downs (family commitment), Cllr Mrs Haddock (family commitment), Cllr Mrs S Newton (unwell) and Cllr Miss Tybinka (family commitment)

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Cousins, Dunkley, Sartin and Stevenson	DPI – Agenda item 13 Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal	Cllrs live in areas of town mentioned within the consultation document
Cllr Boyle	DPI – Agenda item 8d. Rock at the Castle Charity Nomination	Cllr Boyle is a volunteer at CHIPS, one of the applicants.
Cllr Miss Geall	Personal – Agenda item 8d – Rock at the Castle Charity Nomination	Cllr Miss Geall’s mother is a Trustee of one of the applicant charities.

75. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2016 were approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

76. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

The Town Clerk confirmed that the contract for the Christmas lights had been signed.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The action sheet be received and noted.

77. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

78. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – TOWN AND TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Committee received a report summarising activity at the Tourist Information Centre (TTIC).

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the lease negotiations for the new premises were coming to an end and a draft lease was now with the landlord for signature. Planning permissions for signage and listed building consent were awaited and due by mid-July and three potential shop fitting companies were drawing up proposals. There was a lead time of 3-4 weeks for the work to be ordered, plus up to three days installation work.

The Committee questioned the number provided in the email enquiries element within the report and considered that this should be broken down into two sections to reflect clearly the reason for the generation of email. i.e. Those which are responses (i.e to competitions etc) and those which are genuine enquiries.

Whilst it was noted that the stock available for sale was generally improving and this was reflected in the increased income, there remained a view that some of the new stock appeared bland and of lower quality.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

79. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS

The Committee received a report on the events programme for 2016 as well as feedback of the events that had taken place.

The Committee reflected on the Visit Herts Big Weekend event, which was noted as not being particularly successful, given that half of the people who had been awarded free tickets for the afternoon tea at the Castle did not show up, despite having been reminded of the event. In the opinion of the Committee, the event didn't work in the current format and as a result decided not to take part in the 2017 initiative. Nevertheless, it was agreed to keep an eye on the arrangements for the Visit Herts Big Weekend, and if the format changed, to reconsider the Council's involvement.

The Arts Launch had proved successful and the general feedback had been positive. The Carnival had been extremely busy and well over 1000 visitors took part in a Castle tour on the day.

The Teddy Bears' Picnic and Rock at the Castle were large upcoming events that required volunteers to help on the day.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.
- b) The Committee **does not** take part in the Visit Herts Big Weekend initiative in 2017.

80. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE

The Committee received a report summarising the various projects designed to assist the economic health and development of the town centre.

Free Town Centre Wifi was now up and running. It was hoped that detailed analytics of use would be available for the next meeting of the Committee, including how long users remained logged on and the number of re-users to the service. The Committee recognised the importance of regularly reminding the public of its availability, possibly by displaying the large poster in town and ensuring there was a permanent reference to the free wifi on the GoHertford website. It was confirmed that hits to the GoHertford website had increased from 800 per week to 1500 since the introduction of the free wifi.

The displays in the community notice boards were noted as being untidy and this it was considered was largely due to the metal interior of the boards. The Committee view was that a backing board or fabric should be added to the back of the board to assist in making the display neater.

The Committee wished to express its appreciation to the Town Centre Coordinator, Melvin Caton for his work with the Council and for the many initiatives

and events he had introduced to the Town Centre. The Town Centre Co-ordinator was due to retire at the end of July 16.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee **notes** the progress made on delivering the Council's Town Centre Priorities and the planned activities for 2016.

81. ROCK AT THE CASTLE CHARITY NOMINATION

The Committee reviewed the applications to select a charity to benefit from Rock at the Castle.

Note: Having previously declared a DPI, Cllr Boyle left the room during the discussion on this item.

The Committee considered the merits of each application and noted the level of financial support each organisation had received from the Council in recent years as well as the various applicants' impact on residents of Hertford.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **adopts** Children's Integrated Playschemes (CHIPS) as the charity to benefit from Rock at the Castle in 2016.

82. HERTFORD ENTREPRENEURS'

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the latest Hertford Entrepreneurs developments and events. Cllr Stevenson confirmed that the next event was to be a video masterclass and another planned event was on how to survive as a small business. Cllr Stevenson stated that it was planned that at the next Committee meeting consideration would be given to planning a full programme for a year in advance.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report

83. VENUE HIRE REPORT

The Committee received an update on the hire statistics for the Castle and Mill Bridge rooms. The Committee was delighted to note the increased bookings at both the Castle and Millbridge Rooms.

The increase in bookings had however brought competing pressures, particularly on staff time. A recommendation had been made to not continue with bookings on a Sunday to relieve some of pressures on staff time, however the Committee was of the opinion that the Council had invested a good deal of money in the

refurbishment the Castle and therefore needed a return on its investment. Staff welfare was however recognised as being of the utmost importance and the Town Clerk was therefore requested to consider the staffing resources necessary to allow for venue hire seven days per week. The cost of bringing in staff on a Sunday was noted and therefore any booking on a Sunday must be priced accordingly to recognise the increased costs involved in opening the Castle on a Sunday.

Delegated authority was given to the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman along with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Personnel Sub Committee to review the staffing situation and take the necessary steps to ensure the Council was adequately resourced.

The further recommendation to no longer offer marquee weddings was approved by the Committee.

The Committee noted that the interpretation boards in the grounds of the Castle were old and consideration was given to their replacement. Whilst it was noted there was no budget available for such a task at present, officers were requested to have discussion with officers at East Herts Council regarding design and content for the replacement interpretation boards.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.
- b) The Committee **delegates** authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Personnel Sub Committee to address the resourcing of weekend venue hire at the Castle.
- c) The Committee **approves** the removal of marquee wedding hire option from the wedding packages offered.
- d) The Committee **approves** the replacement of the Interpretation boards in the Castle Gardens in partnership with East Herts Council subject to cost, design and content.

84. FRIENDS OF HERTFORD CASTLE

The Committee had received a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Hertford Castle held on 13 April 2016. The Committee was pleased to note there were a number of new members who were willing to work at Castle during open days.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee **notes** the minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Hertford Castle held on 13 April 16.

85. CCTV STATISTICS

The Committee received a report from the Finance Manager outlining the recent CCTV statistics.

The Police had requested an extension of the hours of the Taxi Marshalls to 3.30am to accommodate the closing time of the Stonehouse. The Town Clerk had ascertained that the starting hours of the Taxi marshals could be adjusted from 10pm to 10.30pm to allow for the later finish time, at no extra cost. The Committee approved the change in hours and it was confirmed that it would be implemented within the next few weeks.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.
- b) The Committee **approves** the proposed change of the hours of operation of the Taxi marshalling scheme.

86. MAIDENHEAD STREET

The Committee received an update and proposals for enhancing Maidenhead Street. Whilst the Committee was pleased to note the possibility of installing planters in Maidenhead Street, the chairman advised that, following a meeting of the Town Centre Strategy Implementation Group, work of a more substantial basis was progressing. The Chairman therefore suggested that the Council would be best to focus on the likelihood of the more substantial changes at present, and reassess the situation regarding planters in the Autumn. The Committee requested that some work take place on the gates, including some refurbishment and painting.

The Committee was disappointed to learn of the continuing delay in the installation of the new street lights, which it was understood to be due to the difficulty in sourcing the correct brackets.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee defers a decision regarding the installation of planters in Maidenhead Street until the Autumn whilst more substantial changes to the street are considered.

87. HERTFORD HERITAGE TRAIL

The Committee received an update on the progress of the Hertford Heritage Trail. The Committee was grateful for the work of the Civic Society in bringing the project to fruition. The Committee recognised that Port Hill House and the Pest House were very important buildings in Hertford, but neither building was visible or accessible to the public. Nevertheless the Committee approved the inclusion of a plaque placed nearby to both buildings, but which would not be included on the Heritage Trail map.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **approves** that a plaque should be installed at Port Hill House and Pest House.

b) The Committee **notes** the report.

88. HERTFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered the detail within the Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, along with the comments of the Planning Sub Committee.

Additional comments and changes were made as follows:

Page 39 – The Moat Garden – The Committee’s opinion was that the Moat Garden should not be overly landscaped and currently worked well as an open space.

Page 44 – Gascoyne Way Car Park, The Committee supported the idea of some type of screening through planting.

Second Map – The Committee expressed concern that a number of trees could be put at risk on Mangrove Road, if it was taken out of the Conservation Area. (just before Oak Grove beyond Ashbourne Gardens).

Take out reference to Emmaus Superstore, which no longer exists.

The Committee requested that the removal of the area of Mangrove Road at the bottom of section 4 of the map be reconsidered. It was particularly noted that there are a number of trees in this section which would benefit from the protection offered by inclusion in the Conservation Area.

The Committee approved the suggestion of the Planning Sub Committee to arrange a meeting with officers at East Herts Council in the Autumn, when it might be possible for the Council to take on some of the work detailed with the Conservation area report.

The Committee acknowledged its appreciation of the Conservation Area Appraisal which it noted had involved a lot of officer time.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee responds to the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan using the basis of the comments of the Planning Sub Committee (with alterations and omissions) and the comments given above.

89. PLANNING TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC - PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee had received copies of the minutes of the Planning Sub Committee meetings held on 29 February, 14 March, 4 April, 18 April, 27 April, 3 May, 16 May, 31 May and 13 June 2016.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the Planning Sub Committee held on 29 February, 14 March, 4 April, 18 April, 27 April, 3 May, 16 May, 31 May and 13 June 2016 be received.

90. FINANCE – END OF YEAR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2015/16

The Committee received a report on the end of year income and expenditure for 2015/16.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee **notes** the end of year income and expenditure to 31 March 2016.
- (b) The Committee recommends to the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee that the unspent balance of £1388 in budget code **6018 (Basement refurbishment)** be carried forward to fund new interpretation panels for the Castle.
- (c) The Committee recommends to the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee that £2000 of unspent balance in code **6220 (Downshire Suite Marketing)** be carried forward to purchase new stereo equipment for the venue/

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm